

a signal strength detector in the mobile unit which determines the quality of the signals received by the mobile unit; and

a coder selector in the mobile unit which directs the mobile unit to switch from the first speech coder to the second speech coder when the quality of the signals exceeds predetermined levels, wherein the second speech encoder reduces power consumption in the mobile unit.

40. (New) The wireless communication system of Claim 39, wherein the coder selector switches from said second speech coder to said first speech coder when the quality of the signals is less than the predetermined levels.

41. (New) The wireless communication system of Claim 39, wherein the coder selector may be bypassed.

42. (New) The wireless communication system of Claim 39, wherein the first speech coder is bit exact and the second speech coder is non-bit exact.

43. (New) The wireless communication system of Claim 39, wherein the signal strength detector measures the estimated frame-by-frame bit error rate.

44. (New) The wireless communication system of Claim 39, wherein the signal strength detector is based upon absolute power.

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